

What is claimed is:

1. A method for retrieving a metallic paint color of an approximate color, comprising:

a step of storing color classification codes of a plurality of metallic paint colors in a memory of a computer;

a step of measuring the multi-angle colorimetric value CIE Lab* of a specific metallic paint color;

a step of deciding a color classification code to which the specific metallic color belongs in accordance with the multi-angle colorimetric value CIE Lab*;

a step of inputting the color classification code to which the specific metallic paint color belongs to the computer; and

a step of retrieving a metallic paint color of an approximate color by applying approximate-color computation for computing a color difference only to a metallic paint color having a color classification code same as the color classification code to which the specific metallic paint color among a plurality of metallic paint colors stored in the memory of the computer.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the color classification code is divided into 5 to 100 (both included) by using the chromatic characteristic of a metallic paint color.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein approximate-color computation includes multiplying each angle and each L* value by a weighted factor so as to correlate with visual observation in each angle area from high-light up to shade when computing a CIE color difference in accordance with the CIE Lab* value of multi-angle.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein a weighted factor ranges between 0.5 and 1.0 (both included) at the high-light side (in terms of open angle from specular reflected light between 10° and 25°

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5. The method according to claim 4, wherein a weighted factor further prevents the difference between brightnesses of high-light from increasing to a degree felt through visual observation or more by multiplying the weighing factor of the brightness L^* at the high-light side {between 10° and 25° (both included) in terms of open angle from specular reflected light} by 0.3 to 1.0 (both included).
6. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein when displaying an approximate-color retrieval result on a computer screen, computer graphics of metallic paint colors are displayed starting with the smallest weighted-angle average color difference so that a person can visually select an approximate color.